

Water Words

M

Management Agency Agreement (MAA):

An agreement between the State or Regional Board and another state agency to use each agency's authorities in a coordinated fashion to implement at a specific water quality management plan

Mariculture:

The cultivation of plants and animals in marine waters.

Marsh:

A type of wetland that does not accumulate appreciable peat deposits and is dominated by herbaceous vegetation. Marshes may be fresh or saltwater, tidal or non-tidal. (See Wetlands)

Matching funds:

Money that equals the percentage of contributions required by federal or state law to be matched with the recipient's own funds.

Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL):

The maximum permissible level of a contaminant in water delivered to any user of a public system. MCLs are drinking water standards that are primarily enforced by the Department of Health Services (DHS).

Measure of effect/measurement endpoint:

A measurable characteristic of an ecological entity relative to an assessment endpoint; e.g., a laboratory test for eight species meeting certain requirements may serve as a measure of effect for an assessment endpoint, such as survival of fish, aquatic, invertebrate or algal species under acute exposure.

Measure of exposure:

A measurable characteristic of a stressor (such as the specific amount of mercury in a body of water) used to help quantify the exposure of an ecological entity or individual organism.

Mechanical aeration:

Use of mechanical energy to inject air into water to cause a waste stream to absorb oxygen.

Medium-size water system:

A water system that serves 3,300 to 50,000 customers.

Mercury (Hg):

Heavy metal that can accumulate in the environment and is toxic if breathed or swallowed. (See Heavy metals)

Mesotrophic:

Reservoirs and lakes that contain moderate quantities of nutrients and are moderately productive in terms of aquatic animal and plant life.

Methyl Tertiary Butyl Ether (MTBE):

An additive originally put in gasoline to reduce air pollution, but later found to be a source of groundwater pollution. The State of California ordered a phase-out of its use in California gasoline by the end of 2003.

Methoxychlor:

Pesticide that causes adverse health effects when found in domestic water supplies. It is also toxic to aquatic life.

Methyl orange alkalinity:

A measure of the total alkalinity in a water sample in which the color of methyl orange reflects the change in level.

Migration

1. Movement of a substance from one place to another through natural processes; 2. Movement of a bank, shoreline, bar, or other geomorphic feature over time.

Milligram (mg):

One-thousandth of a gram

Million Gallons Per Day (mgd):

A measure of water flow.

Mining of an aquifer:

Withdrawal of ground water at a rate that exceeds the aquifer's recharge rate. (See Overdraft)

Mining waste:

Residues left over from the extraction of raw materials from the earth.

Mitigate:

To make less severe.

Mixed liquor:

A mixture of activated sludge and water containing organic matter undergoing treatment in an aeration tank.

Mixing zone:

A limited volume of receiving water that is allocated for diluting a wastewater discharge without causing adverse effects to the overall water body.

Moisture content:

1. The amount of water lost from soil upon drying to a constant weight, expressed as the weight per unit of dry soil or as the volume of water per unit bulk volume of the soil. For a fully saturated medium, moisture content indicates the porosity. 2. Water equivalent of snow on the ground; an indicator of snowmelt flood potential.

Moisture holding capacity:

The amount of liquid that can be held against gravity, by waste materials or soil, without generating free liquid

Molecule:

The smallest division of a compound that still retains or exhibits all the properties of the substance.

Monitoring well:

A well used to obtain water quality samples or measure groundwater levels.

Monomictic:

Lakes and reservoirs that are relatively deep, do not freeze over during winter, and undergo a single stratification and mixing cycle during the year (usually in the fall).

Mudballs:

Round material that forms in filters and gradually grows when not removed by backwashing.

Multiple use:

Use of land for more than one purpose; e.g., livestock grazing, watershed and wildlife protection, recreation, and timber production. Also applies to use of bodies of water for recreational purposes, fishing, and water supply.

Municipal discharge:

Discharge of effluent from treatment plants that receive wastewater from households, commercial establishments, and industries. Combined sewer/separate storm overflows are included in this category.

Municipal sewage:

Wastes (mostly liquid) originating from a community. (See Municipal discharge).

Municipal sludge:

Semi-liquid residue remaining from the treatment of municipal water and wastewater.